

I believe that every child in America should have access to medical treatment if they get sick. No matter the family's yearly income, if a 10 year old has the flu they should be able to see a doctor. That's why I voted in support of the [State Children's Health Insurance Program \(SCHIP\) Reauthorization Act](#). Since its creation in 1997, SCHIP has significantly reduced the number of uninsured children in the United States. According to the Congressional Budget Office, [the bill will extend SCHIP health coverage](#) for the 6.6 million children currently covered through the program and ensure that an additional 3.8 million children have access to the medical services they needed. I am glad that the bill will allow California and other innovative states to continue to cover families, because the health of children is inextricably entwined with that of the family as a whole. I am also pleased that this bill includes full dental coverage and mental health parity, recognizing that physical health care is only one part of effective health coverage. Unfortunately, the legislation misses an opportunity to correct a failing in current law that affects pregnant women and children across this country. The law requires a five year waiting period for Medicaid and CHIP coverage for legal immigrant pregnant women and children, and the final bill does not include a provision passed by the House to remove this requirement. It is unconscionable that Republicans in Congress would make pregnant women and innocent children pawns in a raucous and frequently misleading immigration debate. Despite my concern, I supported the bill, as I believe that the program is too important to allow to lapse. My colleagues and I sent a letter to both the leadership of the House and Senate, protesting this lack of coverage. I hope that they will take note of my and others' concerns about the denial of coverage to legally present, otherwise eligible, immigrant children and pregnant women and will work with us to bring this matter to resolution in as swift a manner as possible. I am glad that the House and Senate leadership have been so active in ensuring that we send this bill to the President before the program expires on September 30th, 2007. With passage of this bill, the health of millions of American children will depend on the stroke of the President's pen. I am sure that I express the sentiments of millions of Americans when I say that I hope the President will make the morally correct choice not to veto healthcare for children when this agreement reaches his desk.

[Do you think that the federal government should fund health insurance for children?](#)